



The Old Ironsides Report



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Airport Village gets much-needed medical clinic

By Sgt. Mark Bell, 372nd MPAD

BAGHDAD, Iraq – Residents of a small Iraqi community isolated from Baghdad because of its location inside the U.S. military zone near Baghdad International Airport are seeing enormous changes in their lifestyles thanks to the 414th Civil Affairs Battalion, an Army Reserve unit based in Utica, N.Y.

Airport Village will soon have a new addition to their village when the final touches to a new medical clinic are completed in the next several weeks.

From routine checkups to a parent's worries over their child's high fever, residents of the small village of 5,000 had to make a seemingly dangerous journey into Baghdad.

Although located inside the large military compound near the main airport runway and away from looters and vandals, bringing a medical clinic to the people is only one of many projects the coalition forces have undertaken to help make the villagers' life better.

"It's a wonderful thing the American soldiers are doing for my village," said Mayor Thabitt Hassan, after touring the clinic on Friday. "We needed this clinic to give us better medical care for my people here."

In recent years, Hassan said his villagers have been neglected by the past regime and had to travel longer distances to receive basic medical care.

Since April, the small team of soldiers assigned to the 414th have assessed the community's needs and worked with local leaders to bring a better quality of life into the highly educated community.

"When we first got here in April, we decided these people needed to have a medical clinic," said Maj. John Ready, 39, a 414th team leader from Oneli, N.Y.

Using funds distributed through the Coalition Provisional Authority, a building located on the outer rim of the village has nearly transformed into the Airport Village medical facility.

Together with several neighborhood cleanups, renovations to the local grade school and the repair of the useless sewage system, Ready said coalition forces and the CPA are making a positive difference in the lives of the residents.

Bringing medical treatment closer is vital to the village's survival, said Capt. Steve Hinman, 34, a medical officer from Croghan, N.Y.

"There are so many people here, and during the war, the original clinic was abandoned, looted and destroyed," Hinman said.

"They had no access to medical care and had to go into Baghdad to seek medical attention; that trip alone was relatively dangerous," he said.



Airport Village Mayor Thabitt Hassan and Capt. Steve Hinman, 34, an Army Reservist assigned to the 414th Civil Affairs Battalion, based in Utica, N.Y., tour the Airport Village Medical Clinic construction site.

Although villagers were being treated by a traveling medical team sponsored by Ministry of Health, the bigger problem was that the large volume of patients had to meet in the Mayor's one-room office, because there was no other place for the team to see their patients on a weekly basis, said Hinman.

"We're providing them a place to see their patients," he said. "Doctors, nurses, pharmacists and dentists now have waiting rooms and separate rooms to see patients. This will give them the capacity to see more patients and do more good over longer periods of time."

When it opens, the clinic will be stocked with medical equipment and supplies and restocked with coordination through the Ministry of Health to continue having readily available medical supplies brought into the community, according to Hinman.

Hassan said the opening of the medical clinic is only one sign that good things are coming for his community.

"I can't tell you how grateful we are as a community for their help," said Hassan. "They have done so much to help our community. Soldiers have brought a new school to our children and a better sewage system our homes. Hopefully, we can continue working with the Americans to bring a better life for this village and the rest of Iraq."

Bush Seeks Ideas for Cuban Regime Change

WASHINGTON (AP) - Eager to please a key Florida constituency, President Bush directed his secretary of state and his Cuban-born housing secretary Friday to recommend ways to achieve a transition to democracy in Cuba after 44 years under Fidel Castro.

Secretary of State Colin Powell and Housing Secretary Mel Martinez will chair a panel that will "plan for the happy day when Castro's regime is no more and democracy comes to the island," Bush said during a Rose Garden ceremony.

Iranian Activist Wins Nobel Peace Prize

OSLO, Norway (AP) - Human rights activist Shirin Ebadi won the 2003 Nobel Peace Prize on Friday for her work fighting for democracy and the rights of women and children, the first Muslim woman and the first Iranian to receive the accolade.

Ebadi, Iran's first female judge who also was jailed on charges of slandering government officials, was praised by the Norwegian Nobel Committee for promoting peaceful, democratic solutions in the struggle for human rights.

7 Palestinians Killed in Gaza Strip Raid

RAFAH, Gaza Strip (AP) - Israeli forces trying to demolish smuggling tunnels fought gunmen for hours Friday in the largest raid in six months in the Rafah refugee camp, a frequent battlefield in the Gaza Strip.

Seven Palestinians were killed and 55 were wounded, and an Israeli soldier was also hurt. In the West Bank, the survival of Palestinian Prime Minister Ahmed Qureia's proposed Cabinet was in question after the legislature postponed a vote of approval amid intense political wrangling Thursday.

An exasperated Qureia told Yasser Arafat he no longer wants the job, but stopped short of formally resigning.

Schwarzenegger Ready to Work With Bush

Gov.-elect Arnold Schwarzenegger is arriving in Sacramento with hopes of getting along better with one of California's biggest enemies: the Bush administration.

California has staged epic battles with the federal government on issues including the environment, energy, health care, immigration and medical marijuana.

SAFETY TIP:

In the next few days we may experience high winds. High winds can cause damage to equipment and injuries. The following measures will assist units in preventing injuries and damage:

- Tie down and secure tents, equipment, and antennae.
- Blowing sand will reduce visibility, wear goggles, increase distances between vehicles when driving.
- Ensure aircraft are properly tied down.
- Monitor weather warnings.

Joe Strummer's Final Album Released

LONDON (AP) -- Friends and family toasted the late punk pioneer Joe Strummer at the launch of his last album.

Mick Jones, Strummer's former bandmate in The Clash, was among guests at the event at London's White Cube Gallery Thursday night to mark the release of "Streetcore." Other guests included actor Keith Allen, comic Paul Kaye, actress Sadie Frost and her former husband, ex-Spandau Ballet star Gary Kemp.

Strummer's widow, Lucy, helped launch the Strummerville charity, which aims to help youth groups, organizations and individuals buy instruments, studio and rehearsal time.

Members of reggae band UB40 also attended, as did photographer Pennie Smith, famed for her striking cover shot for The Clash's 1979 album "London Calling."

Strummer, who made his name expressing his politics through his music, died on Dec. 22 after a heart attack. He was 50.

Two Share Lead at Las Vegas Invitational

LAS VEGAS (AP) -- Steve Flesch showed his capability through two rounds of the Las Vegas Invitational, shooting a 64 Thursday at the par-71 TPC at The Canyons to put him in a tie for the lead with Scott Verplank at 17-under 126.

Verplank, Tim Herron and Scott McCarron each shot 62s Thursday but few fans turned out to watch.

Unlike Augusta in April, the U.S. Open in June and most of the other tour stops, this is a tough draw - for players and fans.

"There were at least two or three people out there watching me," said Verplank of his round at the par-72 TPC at Summerlin course.

Flesch made two bogeys a day after his opening-round 62, but kept a share of the lead with a 30 on the back nine at the TPC at The Canyons course.

Charles Howell III (65) is two back at 128. Herron, Craig Barlow (67) and Steve Lowery (64) are at 129 heading into Friday's third round of the 90-hole event.

Chaplain's Thought for the Day:

The Pleasure of Tight Boots

A preacher/farmer bought a brand new pair of boots. However, the boots turned out to be a tad too tight. The boot maker offered to stretch them so they would fit.

"You'll not stretch these boots an inch!", insisted the man. "You see, I start every morning before sunrise checking on some ornery cows that have knocked down a fence or caused some other trouble. Then I go to the office and listen to all of the members complain about this and that. Then I come home to hear my wife tell me what chores I haven't gotten done around the house. When I get ready for bed and I take off those tight boots....Well, some days that's the only pleasure I have!"

You will show me the path of life; in your presence is fullness of joy; at your right hand are pleasures forevermore. Ps. 16:11

May you know the pleasure today of being with God (it's even better than taking off tight boots at the end of the day!).



AFN Sports

0300 – 0530

1000 – 1230

1400 – 1630

1930 -- 2200

2230 -- 0130

COLLEGE FOOTBALL : MICHIGAN @ MINNESOTA

COLLEGE FOOTBALL : CUSA: TCU @ SOUTH FLORIDA

CUBS @ MARLINS

COLLEGE FOOTBALL : BIG XII: KANSAS STATE @ OKLAHOMA STATE

COLLEGE FOOTBALL : SEC: FLORIDA @ LSU

AFN Atlantic

1900 – 2130

2300 – 0130

COLLEGE FOOTBALL : ACC: MIAMI @ FLORIDA STATE

NY YANKEES @ RED SOX